

United States of all rough diamonds from Liberia, whether or not such diamonds originated there, in order to contribute to the international effort to bring a prompt end to the illicit arms-for-diamonds trade by which the RUF perpetuates the tragic conflict in Sierra Leone. This action, as well as those discussed above, also expresses our outrage at the Government of Liberia's ongoing contribution to human suffering in Sierra Leone and other neighboring countries, as well as its continuing failure to abide by international norms and the rule of law.

George W. Bush

The White House,
May 23, 2001.

Remarks at a Military Reenlistment Ceremony

May 23, 2001

I don't know if the Commander in Chief is allowed to say this, but I'm going to anyway. At ease. *[Laughter]*

Mr. Secretary, thank you very much for your service to the country. It's fitting that he is here today, because a few months ago, Secretary Rumsfeld re-upped himself. *[Laughter]* And the Nation is better off for it. General Shelton, thank you for being here. Joint Chiefs, thank you all for coming—family and friends.

Before I begin my remarks, I want to take note of a major event that took place today in the United States Senate. Just a little over an hour ago, the United States Senate, in an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote, voted to give the tax relief to the American people. The House of Representatives has already voted in favor of tax relief. So I'm pleased to report today that tax relief is on the way.

I want to congratulate the 62 Senators who voted for this important measure. Senator Lott and Senator Grassley, Senator Baucus, Senator Miller, and Senator Breaux led the way in giving this victory to the American people. And they deserve our country's thanks and praise.

The economy needs a shot in the arm, so I call on the House and the Senate to reach an agreement on the final tax relief package this week. The sooner the Congress com-

pletes its work, the sooner the American people will have their own money in their own pockets to save and invest as they see fit. Our economy cannot afford any further delays.

And now to the task at hand. I am so appreciative that General Shelton and the other leaders of the military are here. The men and women now know how proud you are of their decision to take another tour of duty. And I'm proud, too. And I welcome you all to the White House.

For two centuries this house has been the final point of decision in the chain of command. Here President Wilson decided that American soldiers would have to go to Europe to fight in World War I. Here Franklin Roosevelt first learned of the attack at Pearl Harbor, and within days, America began a 4-year war in two theaters. Here four modern Presidents dealt with the struggle in Vietnam, from beginning to end.

Every major military operation of the last 200 years was set in motion at the White House. The circumstances have varied greatly, but no President has ever had reason to doubt the ability and commitment of the American Armed Forces. You have shown that commitment today. Like many thousands of others who will reenlist this year, you've done yourselves credit, and you've paid your country a high tribute. The choice was yours to make, and you volunteered again, and your country is very grateful.

Our military depends on reenlistment. This is especially true now, as military technology and equipment grow more complex and more demanding. Perhaps more than ever, the success of our all-volunteer force requires that we keep the best people, the most experienced technicians, and mature leaders of the highest caliber. That is what America gains with each one of you who stays.

In return, America owes you every ounce of support you need to carry out your daily mission. When reenlistment declines, that's usually a sign that such support is missing. I have promised never to let that support waver, never to take you for granted. As long as I live under this roof, our country and our military will be prepared to meet any challenge the future may bring.

For many of you, the decision to reenlist wasn't made alone. You all know the saying: Soldiers enlist, but families reenlist. [*Laughter*] And we have many family members here. You're not taking an oath, but you're making an important commitment. And along the way, all of you have made your share of sacrifices. And I appreciate the chance to thank you for it.

When I speak of supporting the military, that means family members, as well, the bases you call home and the schools where you send your children.

For those who are about to take the oath, congratulations. You repeat some familiar words. You will do so with self-assurance that you might not have had the first time. That comes with hard work and discipline and service to our country. I want each of you to return to your posts with the knowledge that you have my gratitude and full confidence. Thank you again.

And now it is my honor to turn over the proceedings to General Shelton, who will administer the oath of office.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:30 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Education Reform Legislation

May 23, 2001

I commend the House of Representatives for taking a giant step toward improving America's public schools. The education reforms adopted today build on the principles of accountability, flexibility, local control, and greater choices for parents. The reforms require annual testing of students in grades three through eight, give States unprecedented flexibility to meet critical education needs and, for the first time, tie Federal education funding to results. These education reforms also give parents real options to get their children out of persistently failing schools through public school choice with transportation provided, and supplemental services such as tutoring and summer school. I look forward to working with Members of the House and Senate to make sure this vital

legislation becomes law so that no child in America is left behind.

Remarks to the St. Augustine Parish Community in Cleveland, Ohio

May 24, 2001

Father McNulty, thank you very much, sir, for your hospitality and your introduction. It's a privilege for me to be here with Bishop Pilla, whose reputation at least has preceded him as far as the President goes. I've been looking forward for this opportunity to meet such a fine, noble man, firmly committed to helping the poor. So, Bishop, thank you so much for being here, sir.

I'm honored also to be—to have been welcomed by Sister Ambroe. The Sister is pretty firm in her—[*laughter*—she kept us on time. [*Laughter*] I am thankful to be here with distinguished public servants from the State of Ohio, your Governor, Lieutenant Governor, both very good friends of mine. Thank you all for being here. Two fine United States Senators, Mike DeWine and George Voinovich, traveled with me from Washington today. I think you're going back. [*Laughter*] But Ohio is well represented in the Halls of the United States Senate with these two fine Americans. And two Members of the United States Congress, Steve LaTourette and Tony Hall from south Ohio are here, as well. Thank you all for traveling with us today.

Tony is not from this area, but I can assure you that if you got to know him, you would know that he shares the same passion most of us do for figuring out ways to help people in need.

The other thing that I want to make note of is that Tony is a Democrat. And what we're going to talk about today is not a party issue. The idea of helping people transcends political party. And so, Tony, thank you for coming.

I want to thank Pam Delly, the principal of Our Lady of Angels, for the tour and the opportunity to meet the students here. And I want to thank Dennis McNulty, the director of Catholic Charity Services, as well.

I want to start off with a comment about some news. This morning a distinguished